

VZCZCXRO4211
OO RUEHDA
DE RUEHAK #0868/01 1031335
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 131335Z APR 07
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1716
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC//PA
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU
INFO RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 7984
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 2526
RUEHDA/AMCONSUL ADANA 1857
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 5857
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 5621
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2231
RUEUITH/DET 1 39LG ANKARA TU
RHMFIUU/USDOCO 6ATAF IZMIR TU
RHMFIUU/39OS INCIRLIK AB TU
RHMFIUU/AFOSI DET 523 IZMIR TU
RHMFIUU/39ABG INCIRLIK AB TU
RHMFIUU/AFOSI DET 522 INCIRLIK AB TU
RUEUITH/AFLO ANKARA TU

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 000868

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/SE, EUR/PD, NEA/PD, DRL
JCS PASS J-5/CDR S. WRIGHT

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

FRIDAY, APRIL 13, 2007

In Today's Papers

Turkish Army Chief on Northern Iraq, Turkish Presidential Elections
All papers report Yasar Buyukanit, the chief of Turkish General Staff (TGS), told the press in the first briefing he held since he took office that a military incursion against the PKK in northern Iraq should be made, adding that a political decision from the government was required to authorize such a move. Buyukanit noted at the gathering attended by the entire military top brass that the military expects increased PKK terrorist activities in May and that a large-scale military operation has been going on in southeastern Turkey. In what press are interpreting as a covert referral to Iraqi Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani and the US, Buyukanit said those who "spoil" the northern Iraqi Kurdish leaders, encouraging them to make such statements, were known. He also accused the Kurdish leaders of extending logistical support to the PKK. Buyukanit is not hopeful that Iraq's territorial unity could be protected. "It's difficult for the three main groups in Iraq to continue to live together," he said, "I am not of the opinion that there would be a solution in the short or medium terms."

On the upcoming election of Turkey's new president, Buyukanit said, "We hope the next president will be somebody genuinely bound by the basic values of the republic, including secularism, not only in his words, but in his heart as well." "I hope such a president would be elected, but the decision will be up to the parliament," said Buyukanit. Responding to a question on the controversial "Republic Rally" to be held April 14, the military chief said no one should be afraid of legal demonstrations held in a non-violent manner, and that everybody can use such a democratic right.

Conservative and Islamist papers comment that Buyukanit's remarks were a disappointment for those expecting a crisis. Buyukanit issued a message of respect for the law, Yeni Safak says. Some observers in the Turkish press believe Buyukanit's words indicated opposition to the presidential ambitions of Prime Minister Erdogan, others, however, think Buyukanit approved of Erdogan becoming the

next president, an evaluation shared by government figures.

Editorial Commentary on Buyukanit Remarks; Iraq
Semih Idiz commented in the mainstream daily Milliyet: "The remarks of General Buyukanit indicated a problematic period ahead vis-à-vis relations with the Western world. He gave some of his messages indirectly or covertly, but reading between the lines we can see that the Turkish military finds Barzani's statements [about retaliation for a possible Turkish intervention in Kirkuk] unacceptable and believes that, having spoiled the Kurds, the US is behind those words. The possibility of a cross-border operation was also mentioned in the context of ending the PKK trouble and teaching a lesson to Barzani who was 'spoiled by the US.' General Buyukanit's remarks set the tone regarding the army's view on the US as well as Europe. The US is spoiling the Kurds and therefore they are working against Turkey. As for Europe the General noted that 'there are certain centers in Europe aiming at dividing Turkey.' All of this demonstrates one thing: Turkey is entering a challenging period in its relationship with the West."

Kubilay Celik wrote in the ultra-nationalist daily Tercuman:
"Whenever the PKK problem gets more serious, the US rushes to apply the usual formula -- it is up to the Iraqi government to handle because there is now an independent Baghdad government -- and we are supposed to take this as a fact. If that is the reality that Ankara has to accept, then we deserve an explanation about the rationale for sending a copy of the diplomatic note for Iraq to Washington. This seems to be an indication of other facts, such as, Iraq is still under US occupation and the current Baghdad government is a US puppet. The developments in the region also make us believe that Ankara is sending a warning signal to Washington by sending a copy of the diplomatic note. If and when a cross border operation is carried out, Washington will not be able to claim 'we were not

ANKARA 00000868 002 OF 003

informed.' Let's look at another fact: The US is capable of finishing off the PKK overnight, if it really wanted to."

Arinc on Presidential Elections Process

All papers report Parliament Speaker Bulent Arinc said in a press briefing Thursday he will initiate the first round of voting for presidency if at least 184 lawmakers are present in the parliament, stressing the two-third majority of 367 MPs was not required for the process, as some opposition leaders have maintained. Arinc said the elections would be completed without any crisis and that those expecting a disturbance would be disappointed.

Arinc stated that applications for candidacy will start on the 16th and end on the 25th of April. "If none of the candidates get the sufficient number of votes, which is 367, then we will hold a second round after three days. If we attain no result, a third round will be held after three days. In the third round, the simple majority of votes, that is 276, will be required to elect the president. If none of the candidates poll 276 votes, we will hold the fourth round for the two leading candidates. If no candidate receives 276 votes in the fourth round, the Constitution stipulates that elections must be renewed," Arinc emphasized. He added the new president will be sworn in with a ceremony in the Turkish Parliament on May 16.

Arinc also warned the public against supporting the April 14 "Republic Rally" organized by former gendarme commander Sener Eryugur, who had recently been the focus of allegations for a military plot to oust the government in 2004.

PM Erdogan Responds to Questions on Presidential Elections

All papers: Responding to the questions of journalists yesterday, PM Erdogan said that they would wait until midnight April 25 to reveal the name of their Presidential candidate. The PM continued his rounds of talks with AKP deputies yesterday. He told them "as a poor person, I have no desire for Presidency. My goal is to bring the gross national income above \$ 10,000 and create a respected country where people live comfortably." Evaluating General Buyukanit's remarks, PM Erdogan said that "he spoke within the framework of democracy and law."

April 14 Rally in Ankara

Sabah, Cumhuriyet, Vatan, Aksam and others: Papers report that the security forces will take extensive measures for the "Republic March", arranged by the Ataturk Thought Association, which will be held in Ankara on April 14. 10,000 policemen will be on duty during the rally. Sabah reports that because of the rally hotels in Ankara were fully booked.

Paper: Turkey-US Agree on Closing Makhmour Camp

The intellectual Islamist-oriented Zaman reports Turkey and the US have agreed on the closure of Makhmour Camp in northern Iraq. The issue will be discussed at a UN meeting in Geneva on April 17-18 among Turkey, Iraq, and the UN. An agreement on the Makhmour closure will have to be approved by the Turkish Parliament, which, according to Turkish officials, could take time. Expecting not all of around 12,000 refugees in the camp to return to Turkey, Ankara warned the US not to allow their relocation to Kirkuk or other areas near the Turkish border, according to Zaman.

TV Highlights
NTV (6 a.m.)

Domestic News

- Two PKK suspects plotting bomb attacks in Istanbul have been captured by police.
- Prime Minister Erdogan is to visit Germany on April 14-16. Erdogan will meet with Chancellor Merkel in Hannover over the weekend.

ANKARA 00000868 003 OF 003

- Nobel laureate Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk has traveled to Paris to deliver a lecture at Sorbonne University on Friday.

International News

- The death toll from the al-Qaeda-claimed suicide bombings in Algeria rose to 33.
- A suicide bomber killed three lawmakers and another five Iraqi civilians inside the Parliament building in the Green Zone in Baghdad.
- Israeli daily Yedioth Ahronoth reports Israel's negotiations on selling the joint US-Israeli Arrow anti-missile system to Turkey has been stalled by US objections.
- Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf said tribesmen have killed some 300 foreign militants during a weeklong offensive in South Waziristan.

WILSON